

The author, after balancing the arguments of the two theories respecting the classification of this body, gave as his reasons for retaining them on the side of the animal kingdom, the following summary :—

1st. That while *Closterium* has a circulation of molecules greatly resembling that of plants, it has also a definite organ, unknown in the vegetable world, in which the active molecules appear to enjoy an independent motion, and the parietes of which appear capable of contracting upon its contents.

2nd. That the green gelatinous body is contained in a membranous envelope, which, while it is elastic, contracts also upon the action of certain re-agents, whose effects cannot be considered purely chemical.

3rd. The comparison of the supposed ova with cytoblasts and cells of plants, precludes the possibility of our considering them as the latter, while the appearance of a vitelline nucleus, transparent but molecular fluid, a chorion or shell, determines them as animal ova. It was shown to be impossible that these eggs had been deposited in the empty shell by other infusoria, or that they were the produce of some entozoon.

4th. That while it was impossible to determine whether the vague motions of *Closterium* were voluntary or not, yet the idea the author had formed of a suctorial apparatus, forbid his classing them with plants.

Lastly, in no instance had the action of iodine produced its ordinary effects upon starch or vegetable matter, by colouring it violet or blue, although Meyen asserts it did in his trials.

The author therefore concluded that *Closterium* must still be retained as an Infusory Animal, although it is more than doubtful whether it ought to rank with the polygastric families.

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

November 26, 1839.—William H. Lloyd, Esq., in the Chair.

An extensive collection of shells, sponges, &c., presented by J. B. Harvey, Esq., Corr. Memb. Zool. Soc., was exhibited. The specimens contained in this collection are from South Australia, and were principally collected in Kangaroo Island.

Prof. Rymer Jones called the attention of the Meeting to certain specimens contained in this collection, and to the sponges in particular, and, having made some observations upon their structure and mode of reproduction, he entered into the question relating to their animal or vegetable nature.

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Mr. Waterhouse laid before the Meeting the following tabular view of the distribution of the *Rodentia* :—

		Europe and North Asia.	North America.	Africa.	India and Islands.	South America and West Indian Islands.
MURINA.	Scuri- dæ.	5. Sciurus. 1. Pteromys. 1. Tamas. 3. Spermophilus. 2. Arctomys.	20. Sciurus. 3. Pteromys. 5. Tamas. 10. Spermophilus. 8. Arctomys. 1. <i>Aplodontia</i> .	5. Sciurus. 3. Xerus.	25. Sciurus. 9. Pteromys.	6. Sciurus.
	Muridæ.	3. Myoxus. 8. Dipus. 16. Mus.	2. Meriones. 6. { Mus. Hesperomys.	2. Graphiurus. 3. Myoxus. 4. Dipus.	12. Mus.	30. { Mus. Hesperomys. 3. Reithrodon.
	Arvico- lidæ.	6. Cricetus. 1. Castor. 20. Arvicola. 4. Lemmus. 2. Spalax.	1. Sigmodon. 2. Neotoma. 1. Castor. 1. Ondatra. 8. Arvicola. 4. Lemmus. 10. Geomys.	10. Mus. 2. Deidromys. 6. Gerbillus. 1. Psammomys. 3. Euryotis.	2. Gerbillus. 1. Phœomys. 2. Rhizomys.	
	Hystri- cidæ.	1. Hystrix.	1. Erethison.	1. Hystrix.	1. Hystrix. 1. Atherura.	3. Cercolabes. 2. Syntheres.
HYSTRICINA.	Hystri- cidæ.	1. Aulacodus. 1. Orycterus. 4. Batherygus. 1. Petromys.	3. Capromys. 1. Myopotamus. 10. Echimys. 6. Nelomys. 1. Cercomys. 2. Dasyprocta. 1. Cœlogenys.	
	Octo- dontidæ.	2. Ctenomys. 1. Poepagomys. 1. Octodon. 2. Abrocoma.	
	Chin- chillidæ.	1. Chinchilla. 2. Lagotis. 1. Lagostomus.	
	Cavi- dæ.	6. Cavia. 2. Kerodon. 1. Dolichotis. 1. Hydrochærus.	
LEPO- RINA.	Leporidæ.	5. Lepus. 3. Lagomys.	15. Lepus. 1. Lagomys.	6. Lepus.	4. Lepus. 1. Lagomys.	1. Lepus.
		81 spe. 16 gen.	99 spe. 19 gen.	53 spe. 16 gen.	58 spe. 10 gen.	89 spe. 25 gen.

Mr. Waterhouse stated, that in the construction of this table he had endeavoured to display the geographical distribution of the sections of the order *Rodentia*, and that to accomplish this, it of course became necessary to combine some system of classification, with an arrangement of the genera according to the countries in which they were found. The table is divided into five columns, one column being devoted to each of the following portions of the globe: 1st,

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		3. Myoxus.		2. Graphiurus. 3. Myoxus.		
		8. Dipus. 16. Mus.	2. Meriones.	4. Dipus.		
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		1. Castor. 20. Arvicola. 4. Lemmus. 2. Spalax.	1. Sigmodon. 2. Neotoma.			
	Arvico- lidæ.	1. Castor.	1. Castor.			
		1. Hystrix.	1. Erethison.	1. Hystrix.	1. Hystrix. 1. Atherura.	3. Cercolabes. 2. Syntheres.
	HYSTRICINA.	Hystric- idæ.			1. Aulacodus. 1. Orycterus. 4. Batherygus. 1. Petromys.	3. Capromys. 1. Myopotamus. 10. Echimys. 6. Nelomys. 1. Cercomys. 2. Dasyprocta. 1. Cœlogenys.
						2. Ctenomys. 1. Poepagomys. 1. Octodon. 2. Abrocoma.
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	Hystricidae.	1. Hystrix.	1. Erethison.	1. Hystrix.	1. Hystrix. 1. Atherura.	3. Cercolabes. 2. Syntheres.
HYSTRICINA.	Octodontidae.			1. Aulacodus. 1. Orycterus. 4. Bathyergus. 1. Petromys.		3. Capromys. 1. Myopotamus. 10. Echimys. 6. Nelomys. 1. Cercomys. 2. Dasyprocta. 1. Cœlogenys.
	Chinchillidae.					2. Ctenomys. 1. Poepagomys. 1. Octodon. 2. Abrocoma.
	Caviidae.					1. Chinchilla. 2. Lagotis. 1. Lagostomus.
	Leporidae.					6. Cavia. 2. Kerodon. 1. Dolichotis. 1. Hydrochaerus.
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Europe and North Asia; 2nd, North America; 3rd, Africa; 4th, India and the Indian Islands; 5th, South America and the West Indian Islands.

In these columns the names of the genera found in each province are inserted, and the number of known species belonging to each genus (as nearly as can be ascertained) is also indicated. Horizontal lines separate the genera according to the sections to which they are supposed to belong.

“The few Rodents found in Australia all belong to the family *Muridæ*. About six species are known, and these appertain to the genera *Mus*, *Hapalotis*, Licht. (which is the *Conilurus* of Mr. Ogilby), *Hydromys* and *Pseudomys*.

“The first thing that strikes the attention,” observed Mr. Waterhouse, “is, that the great mass of South American Rodents belong to a different section from those of the northern portions of the globe, and that they are of a lower grade of organization, as is also the case with respect to the Old and New World Monkeys.”

The next point to which Mr. Waterhouse drew attention was the relative number of species found in warm and in temperate climates. “If the number of species found in the two provinces, Europe (including North Asia) and North America, be added together, the total is 180 species, whilst in all the rest of the world, taken together, the amount is only 206; and if from this last number those species which inhabit the temperate portions of South America and Australia (amounting to about 30) be deducted, and added to the first amount, it would appear that the Rodents are most abundant in temperate regions. In the Mammals of large size the case is reversed.

“The total number of species inhabiting each of the provinces pointed out in the table varies less than perhaps might be expected. The European province, North America, and South America, are nearly equal as to the number of species they contain; India and Africa are also nearly equal, but they contain fewer species than either of the other provinces.

“The Squirrels, Rats, Porcupines, and Hares (constituting the genera *Sciurus*, *Mus*, *Hystrix*, and *Lepus*), are the only groups which are found in all the provinces.

“The *Sciuridæ* abound most in North America and India, and are least abundant in Africa and South America. In the latter country they appear to be chiefly confined to the northern portions, and are totally wanting in the southern.

“The *Muridæ* are about equally abundant in Europe, Africa, and

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“The *Arvicolidæ* appear to be confined to North America and the European province. In South America they are apparently replaced by the *Octodontidæ*, *Chinchillidæ*, and *Caviidæ*.

“The family *Leporidae* is but feebly represented in each of the provinces above-mentioned, excepting in North America, where the number of species already discovered is almost equal to all those found in other portions of the globe taken together. In earlier periods, these Rodents, which are very low in the scale, appear to have been much more numerous, judging from the fossil remains which have been found,—at least in the European province.

“The remaining families of Rodents are almost entirely confined to South America. The genus *Aulacodus* of Western Africa, the genera *Petromys*, an inhabitant of the Cape of Good Hope, and *Bathyergus*, found both at the Cape and north-east portions of Africa, possess certain characters in which they approach the South American forms. *Petromys* analogically appears to represent the Octodons of South America, and *Bathyergus* may be compared to the genera *Poephagomys* and *Ctenomys*; whilst in *Aulacodus* we possess a representative of the *Capromys* of the West Indies.”

Mr. Waterhouse observed “that he had not yet been able to satisfy himself as to the precise situation, in a systematic classification, of the genera *Ctenodactylus* and *Helamys*, the former from North, and the latter from South Africa. Four other genera are omitted in the above table for the same reason; they are, *Otomys** of Dr. Smith, a genus found at the Cape of Good Hope; *Akodon*, Meyen, which inhabits Peru; *Heteromys*, Desmarest, founded on the *Mus anomalus* of Thompson, an animal found in the island of Trinidad; and lastly, *Sacomys* of F. Cuvier, which is supposed to be from North America. These four genera in all probability belong to the family *Muridæ*.

“The genus *Aplodontia* is placed with the *Sciuridæ*, but it must be observed that it differs much from the typical species of that group, there being no post-orbital process to the skull, and the molar teeth being rootless.

“The remains of Rodents found in a fossil state indicate that the different provinces were formerly inhabited by the same forms as those which are now found in them.”

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